

# Conversation Contents

## Weekly Report to the Secretary - June 15, 2017

### Attachments:

/30. Weekly Report to the Secretary - June 15, 2017/1.1  
WeeklyReporttotheSecretary06-22-17.docx

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## **"Rees, Gareth" <gareth\_rees@ios.doi.gov>**

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**Sent:** Thu Jun 22 2017 12:15:00 GMT-0600 (MDT)  
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**Subject:** Weekly Report to the Secretary - June 15, 2017  
**Attachments:** WeeklyReporttotheSecretary06-22-17.docx

Good Afternoon All,

Please find attached the weekly report to the Secretary. I have attached both the word and Google Doc versions of the reports. If there are any issues, please let me know.

Thanks

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Gareth C. Rees

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 **Weekly Report to the Secretary 06-22-17**

**WEEKLY REPORT TO THE SECRETARY  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

June 22, 2017

## Office of the Solicitor

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## **Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

For the week of June 26, Acting Assistant Secretary Virginia Johnson will be in the office all week. On June 27, she will join Jim Cason for a meeting with the Citizens for the Economic Future of Swain County and later with the Executive Committee of the National Association of State Park Directors.

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

Nothing additional to report.

## **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

On June 26-27, FWS Acting Director Greg Sheehan will represent FWS at the Midwestern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Meeting.

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

On June 22 and 23, FWS will meet with the Department of the Navy to discuss the ongoing consultation and draft biological opinion for the Marines' relocation to Guam and its impact on endangered species. The consultation is being conducted as required by Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. It is being closely monitored by environmental groups in Guam, Hawaii and the mainland for an action that is extremely important for the Pacific area national security focus. FWS is on track to meet its commitment to the Navy to be finished with the consultation by July 19. This is potentially controversial to some environmental groups. This is for internal notification purposes only, so no outreach is currently planned.

On or around June 22, FWS plans to announce a final determination on the bureau's March 11, 2016, proposal to identify the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) grizzly bear population of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming as a distinct population segment (DPS) and revise the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife by removing grizzly bears within the GYE DPS due to recovery. This action is controversial. Interested stakeholder groups include the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (including federal, tribal, state and local government entities), agricultural producers, hunting groups and environmental groups. Comprehensive outreach is planned to include a broadly distributed news release to media, tribal letters and calls, emails to Congress, in-person Congressional calls to select members and a Congressional telebriefing and embargoed media calls.

### **Endangered Species Act Recovery Actions**

In coming weeks, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a notice designating two areas in northwest Oregon as nonessential experimental population areas for the reintroduction of Oregon

silverspot butterfly. The butterfly is listed as threatened under the ESA. This action is not controversial. Stakeholders include the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Forest Service, Oregon State Parks and Recreation, Oregon Zoo, The Nature Conservancy and local tribal partners. Outreach will include notifications to stakeholders, news release to local and regional media and social media and website posts. This action is pending clearance by the Department.

In coming weeks, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* draft population assessment reports for the Southern Beaufort Sea and Chukchi-Bering seas populations of polar bear in Alaska and open a 90-day public comment period. This action is not controversial. Interested stakeholder groups are the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the North Slope Borough.

In coming weeks, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a notice of availability of the revised draft recovery plan for the giant garter snake in California. The cost of certain actions pertaining to habitat acquisition, restoration and management is listed as “To be decided,” reflecting the considerable uncertainty around what the actual cost of those actions will be once completed. Stakeholders include federal and state agencies, conservation organizations, local agricultural communities and local municipalities as it concerns water usage. This action is not expected to be controversial, although the estimated costs of voluntary actions and actions needed for recovery could generate local stakeholder and media attention. Planned outreach includes early notifications to stakeholders, news release to local media and postings to website and social media. This is pending clearance by the Department.

FWS plans to release an environmental assessment (EA) for public review later this month. The document evaluates visitor services facilities, infrastructure and habitat improvements on the 57-acre Three Sisters Springs unit of the Crystal River NWR, which provides critical winter habitat for the Florida manatee and the most popular site for public manatee viewing in the state. FWS manages the Three Sisters Springs unit by agreement with the City of Crystal River and the Southwest Florida Water Management District. The EA deals primarily with terrestrial features and activities, and incorporates the input of a city and FWS sponsored community working group. Implementation of the EA is contingent on the renegotiation of the FWS’ management agreement. Issues related to the Three Sisters Springs unit tend to be locally controversial. Local outreach is planned to include posting the EA on the refuge’s website, a news release and in-person communications with the *Citrus Chronicle* editorial board.

On June 26, FWS expects to publish a notice announcing consideration of a draft candidate conservation agreement (CCA), draft candidate conservation agreement with assurances (CCAA) and draft environmental assessment for the Texas hornshell (proposed for listing) and other covered species (Rio Grande River cooter, gray redhorse, blue sucker and Pecos springsnail), and an enhancement of survival permit application under the Endangered Species Act submitted by the Center of Excellence. The covered area would include portions of Eddy County, New Mexico, and Culberson County, Texas. The proposed listing of the hornshell may be controversial in Texas and southern New Mexico. Significant outreach has been conducted already; no additional outreach is planned.

### **Endangered Species Act Listing/Delisting Actions**

Pending clearance, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final listing determination for the i’iwi, a Hawaiian bird. This action is not controversial. The only interested stakeholder groups are the petitioners, Center for Biological Diversity and Life Net. FWS is required by settlement agreement to submit the finding for the i’iwi to the *Federal Register* by September 20. Outreach is planned to Hawaiian media and to national conservation and bird-centric media.

In late June, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* 12-month findings on petitions to list the Mohave shoulderband snail found in southern Kern County, California; and the San Felipe gambusia, a Texas fish. These actions are not expected to be controversial. Stakeholders include WildEarth Guardians, the Center for Biological Diversity and Gold Queen Mine for the Mohave shoulderband snail. The primary stakeholder is WildEarth Guardians for the San Felipe gambusia. FWS is required by settlement agreement to submit the finding for the Mohave shoulderband snail to the *Federal Register* by June 30. Outreach will involve stakeholder notifications, news releases to local media and website posts.

## **National Park Service**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

Nothing to report.

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

From now through September, preparations are underway for a major rehabilitation project at Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial. There will be periodic, partial closures of the house and site to accommodate the work. The site is expected to close completely in September for the major construction which is expected to last 18 months.

On June 25, the National Mall and Memorial Parks (NAMA) will drain the Rainbow Pool and other water features at the World War II Memorial to replace light fixtures as part of the ongoing Energy Savings Performance Contract. Pools will be refilled and operational again on June 30. The work is being scheduled to avoid conflicting with any Honor Flights that will be visiting the memorial. In early July, NAMA will drain the pond in Constitution Gardens for cleaning and maintenance. It is expected to be empty for approximately a week. Work will not commence until after the July 4th holiday. Neither of these projects are related to the recent draining of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool because of elevated parasite levels.

On June 25, Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, Crow Agency, Montana, will host an annual anniversary event honoring all who fought in the Battle of Little Bighorn. Tribal leaders from 17 associated nations and the Montana Congressional delegation have been invited to attend. Local media will be present.

On June 26, the NPS plans to initiate a 30-day public scoping on a plan to replace Grand Canyon National Park’s trans-canyon pipeline. The trans-canyon pipeline serves the park’s South Rim, which supplies water to facilities serving more than 5 million visitors and 2,500 residents

annually. The pipeline reached the end of its serviceable life and experiences frequent breaks. The cost to replace the pipeline is estimated at \$131.8 million and construction is expected to begin in 2019. The NPS plans to hold public meetings at the park's South Rim and in Flagstaff, Arizona, and will consult with the park's 11 associated tribes.

On June 28, at their 126th Continental Congress in Washington DC, the Daughters of the American Revolution will announce that they are planning to raise funds to donate trees to the NPS. The project includes planting and caring for 76 trees within Independence National Historical Park and 250 trees between and in Valley Forge National Historical Park and Bartram's Garden in Philadelphia. This project is in celebration of the 250th anniversary of the USA, in cooperation with members of the congressionally chartered Semiquincentennial Commission.

On June 30, Golden Gate National Recreation Area will host 14 international emerging leaders selected to participate in a U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program about cultural heritage preservation. Countries represented include: Belarus, Cambodia, Egypt, Estonia, Federated States of Micronesia, Lebanon, Montenegro, Panama, People's Republic of China, Russia, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, and Turkey.

## **Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs and the Bureaus of Indian Affairs and Indian Education**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

Indian Affairs leadership and staff continue to lead Tribal listening sessions on E.O. 13781, Reorganization of the Executive Branch; the remaining sessions are:

- June 22, 8:30 am – 12 pm, Bering Sea Conference Room, Frontier Building, 3601 C Street, Anchorage, AK 99503
- June 27, 8:30 am – 12 pm, Tulsa Convention Center 100 Civic Center Tulsa, OK 74103

On July 19 and July 20, the Self-Governance Advisory Committee quarterly meeting will be held at the Embassy Suites DC Convention Center, 900 10th St NW, Washington, DC 20001. The Acting Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs is invited to attend on Thursday, July 20, 2017.

On July 23, there will be a briefing on the President's Indian Affairs budget request to Senate Committee on Indian Affairs majority and minority staff at the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

On July 24, the Department's Office of Policy Analysis will hold an Indian Economic Development Data Workshop, preceding the Tribal/Interior Budget Council meeting.

On July 25 through July 27, the Tribal/Interior Budget Council (TIBC) meeting will take place at the Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort, located at 22181 Resort Boulevard, Flagstaff, AZ 86004.

On June 27-28, the Indian Energy Service Center will host a Standard Operation Procedures (SOP) training on the Onshore Federal and Indian Energy and Mineral Lease Management manual in Oklahoma City, OK. The SOP training is open to all Department of the Interior staff.

On June 28, there will be a Senate Committee on Indian Affairs roundtable discussion on broadband access in Indian Country. Minority staff seeks a DOI-Indian Affairs representative to discuss the need and challenges of accessing broadband in Indian Country and BIE schools.

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

On June 23 or 26, the final rule on waiving Departmental review of appraisals and valuations of Indian property (43 CFR 100) will publish.

## **Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

Nothing to report.

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

During the week of June 26, OSMRE plans to submit the Bull Hill #2 mine plan decision documents to the ASLM for review and approval. Located in Latimer County, OK, the mine is owned by Farrell-Cooper Mining and contains approximately 384,000 tons of recoverable Federal coal, employing 36 people.

On June 26, BLM-NM State Director Amy Lueders and Associate State Director Aden Seidlitz will meet in Albuquerque with the Interagency Borderlands Committee, including Brent Range, the Department's new Interagency Borderlands Coordinator. Other attendees will include representatives from BLM law enforcement, the Solicitor's Office, USFWS, and NPS.

On June 26 - 28, the Western Governors' Association (WGA) will hold its annual meeting in Whitefish, MT, during which Secretary Zinke and BLM Acting Director Mike Nedd are scheduled to speak. During the WGA meeting, the National Invasive Species Council (NISC) will present a strategic plan that has been integrated with Federal, state and tribal commitments. The NISC membership consists of senior leadership from the Departments of State, Treasury, Agriculture and the Interior, OMB, and EPA, among others. The purpose of the Council is to provide high-level vision and leadership to sustain and expand Federal efforts to prevent, eradicate, and control invasive species.

On June 26 - 30, BLM-CA State Director Jerry Perez plans to conduct courtesy visits with members and staff of the CA Congressional delegation in Washington, DC to discuss public land management issues, including oil and gas development, planning efforts, wildfire, renewable energy, and recreation.

On June 27, BOEM is scheduled to hold a meeting with the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe concerning the MA, NY, and RI Wind Energy Areas (WEA). This is part of a series of government-to-government consultation meetings held with area tribes on pertaining to these nearby and adjacent WEA's.

On June 27 – 29, FERC will hold three public scoping meetings in Coos Bay, Roseburg, and Klamath Falls, OR, on its controversial Jordan Cove Liquefied Natural Gas Facility and Pacific Connector Gas Pipeline EIS. As the cooperating agency, the BLM will adopt FERC's EIS. The BLM analyzed the project's conformance with the current RMPs in April and May 2017 and concluded that amendments to the Northwestern, Coastal and Southwestern RMPs will likely be needed for the project to move forward. The project has been criticized by activist groups with regards to the pipeline's potential greenhouse gas emissions and damage to oyster beds in Coos Bay, as well as potential public safety hazards.

On June 28, BLM-CO's Grand Junction Field Office will release for public comment an amended Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Fram Whitewater oil and gas Master Development Plan. Fram proposes to drill 108 oil and gas wells on 12 new well pads. The amended EA considers specific impacts to air quality and well stimulation. The company estimates the project could produce up to 8.7 million barrels of oil over 20 years. If approved, an estimated 65 new jobs would be created.

On June 28, BSEE will hold a workshop with NASA on Probabilistic Risk Assessment (PRA). NASA will introduce its guide to PRA to industry stakeholders and solicit input on its potential application to offshore oil and gas projects.

On June 29, the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources plans to hold a hearing on access to onshore oil and gas development on public lands. Acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Kate MacGregor will be the Department's witness.

On June 30, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will publish the NOA for the Alaska Standalone Pipeline draft supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), initiating a 45-day comment period. The proposed 733-mile natural gas pipeline would run from Prudhoe Bay on the Arctic Ocean to Point MacKenzie on Cook Inlet/Knik Arm, and would require a right-of-way to cross 230 miles of public lands. BLM-AK is a cooperating agency on the supplemental EIS and prepared an analysis of subsistence impacts in accordance with Section 810 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act.

On June 30, BOEM plans to publish a final rule to address the use of OCS sand, gravel, and shell resources for shore protection, beach restoration, and coastal wetlands restoration projects by Federal, state, and local government agencies for construction projects authorized by or funded in whole or part by the Federal Government. The rule will describe the negotiated noncompetitive agreement process and codify new and existing procedures.

On June 30, BLM-UT is scheduled to begin a second 15-day public comment period for the Gunnison Valley Seismic Project Environmental Assessment, analyzing Dawson Geophysical's seismic survey proposal. The proponent seeks to conduct a 3-D geophysical seismic study on approximately 38,700 acres located about 26 miles northwest of Moab, UT.

On June 30, BOEM plans to publish the Record of Decision for a project to rehabilitate 4 miles of shoreline damaged by Hurricane Matthew in Martin County, FL. The Bureau will enter into a 3-party agreement with Martin County and the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to dredge up to 1,000,000 cubic yards of OCS sand.

In late June, upon recommendation from the BOEM, ASLM is considering a proposal to implement of a 12.5% royalty rate for oil and gas production in shallow water depths only for leases offered in GOM Leas Sale 249. Bids for leasing in shallow waters have been in steady decline, primarily due the high incidents of natural gas in shallow water depths, which compete unfavorably with more onshore gas resource plays. The Bureau will make the announcement using a Note to Stakeholders and affected governors will be notified via correspondence.

In late June/early July, depending on the Department's approval process, BLM plans to issue the Boardman to Hemingway Record of Decision. On February 28, BLM received the Biological Opinion from the National Marine Fisheries Service. BLM-OR land use plan amendments are being handled concurrently and the decision will be issued simultaneously with the ROD for the EIS and approval to issue a right-of-way grant.

In late June or early July, pending Departmental approval, BOEM plans to initiate the process of developing a new Five Year Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Program with publication of a Request for Information and Comments. As required by section 18 of the OCS Lands Act, notification letters will be sent to all 50 Governors and several Federal agencies. This action will be taken pursuant the April 28, 2017, Executive Order entitled, "Implementing an America-First Offshore Energy Strategy" and Secretary's Order 3350, issued on May 1, 2017.

## Assistant Secretary Policy, Management and Budget

### Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel

- Who: DAS-PRE Harry Humbert and Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) Director Bryan Rice
- What: 41st Annual National Indian Timber Symposium
- When: June 26-29, 2017
- Where: Yakima, Washington
- Press: Open
- Topic: DAS-PRE Humbert will give the DOI Wildland Fire Update and Director Rice will speak on two panels providing leadership perspective on wildland fire and viewpoints on how Tribes can effectively engage with other agencies.
- Who: Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR) State and Indian Coordination
- What: Montana Agreement Review
- When: June 26-30, 2017
- Where: Helena, Montana
- Press: Closed
- Topic: Agreement reviews are conducted to assure the States and Tribes comply with the terms and conditions of the 202/205 Agreements. The main areas reviewed include: agreement costs, safeguarding of records, equipment assessment, compliance review manual standards, and contract performance.
- Who: Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC) Portland and spill response professionals from all sectors
- What: Clean Waterways Conference
- When: June 27-28, 2017
- Where: Louisville, KY
- Press: Open
- Topic: Regional Environmental Officer (REO) Portland will present on the Department's efforts to prepare for inland oil spills
- Who: Interagency Borderlands Coordinator Jon Andrew and new Coordinator Brent Range
- What: Mini-Border Forum
- When: June 29, 2017
- Where: Tucson, Arizona
- Press: Closed
- Topic: A mini-Border Forum will be convened in Tucson, Arizona. In attendance will be DOI land managers, USDA Forest Service personnel, and U.S. Border Patrol from the Yuma and Tucson sectors.

### Week Ahead Announcements and Actions

**OMB issues Memorandum to Reduce Federal Agency Reporting Burden.** On June 15, 2017, OMB issued Memorandum M-17-26, *Reducing Burden for Federal Agencies by Rescinding and*

*Modifying OMB Memoranda.* This action, the first of a multi-phased effort, removes administrative burden from agencies by rescinding, modifying, or pausing 59 requirements including grants metric reporting, compliance goals for contractor past performance reporting, Value Engineering reporting, and elimination of the Council on Financial Assistance Reform. In the coming months, OMB will continue examining other reporting requirements and work with Federal agencies and Congress to identify and remove additional layers of burdensome policies and guidance documents.

**Suspension and Debarment Actions.** On June 9, 2017, DOI proposed to debar Margaret Maldonado based on her conviction on the charge of theft by swindle. Maldonado was an employee of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Bloomington, Minnesota, whose duties involved selling Federal Duck Stamps and senior citizen park passes, and depositing the sales proceeds to the Treasury repository. An audit disclosed that during Fiscal Years 2015 and 2016 several thousand dollars of cash and checks from the sales proceeds were never deposited. Maldonado pled guilty and was convicted in November 2016.

On June 9, 2017, DOI debarred Sharon Ann Baldwin, a/k/a Sharon Ann Emerson, based on her conviction on the charge of theft of Government money. Baldwin knowingly and willfully stole and converted for her own use approximately \$130,000 belonging to the National Park Service. At the time of the offense, Baldwin was an employee of the National Park Service. From approximately February 2011 through approximately March 2016, Baldwin stole a portion of the park entrance fees for her own use and altered electronic records and documentation to conceal the theft.

**ONRR Civil Penalties.** The Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR) anticipates issuing a civil penalty of about \$14,600 to Slawson Exploration (Slawson). ONRR investigated Slawson's failure to correct volume variances timely for January, 2011 through December, 2012 on one agreement in the State of North Dakota. ONRR issued a Notice of Noncompliance (NONC) to Slawson detailing the volume variances and provided a 20-day cure period to correct. Slawson failed to comply during the cure period. Since Slawson is a small company with no prior violations, OE computed the civil penalty assessment using the standard rates of \$5 per day per violation for the first 40 days and \$10 per day, per violation thereafter.

**Year 2017 Small Business Accomplishments to Date.** As of June 14, 2017, the Department has awarded 54.71% of its contract award dollars to small businesses. The Department-wide small business goal, which was negotiated with the Small Business Administration (SBA), is 53.5%. The Department awarded 21.42% of its contract award dollars to small disadvantaged businesses and 13.93% of its contract award dollars to women-owned small businesses, exceeding the statutory goal of 5% for each. The Department awarded 3.46% of its contract award dollars to historically underutilized business zone small businesses and 3.52% of its contract award dollars to service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses. The statutory goal is 3% for each of these categories.

**Royalty Policy Committee.** ONRR issued a Federal Register Notice to extend the nomination period for the Royalty Policy Committee (Committee) by an additional 30 days. On April 3, 2017, the Department of the Interior published a notice establishing the Committee and

requesting nominations. The last submission date for Committee nominations is now July 3, 2017.

## **Assistant Secretary for Water and Science**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

On June 27, Acting AS/WS Scott Cameron will present an overview and progress-to-date of the Department's Invasive Mussels Initiative, and discuss opportunities for collaboration and next steps at the 100th Meridian Initiative Columbia River Basin Team meeting in Helena, Montana. Scott will return to Washington, DC, on June 28.

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

In the coming weeks, the Department will release a new USGS report on critical minerals for the United States. This publication presents resource and geologic information for 23 mineral commodities currently viewed as important to our national economy and national security, many of which are sourced entirely outside of the United States. The report provides an in-depth look at each commodity's use, distribution of deposit types, and current status of production, resources, and reserves. The individual commodity chapters serve as an update to the 1973 commodity chapters of USGS Professional Paper 820, United States Mineral Resources. A DOI news release is planned.

On June 27, Acting Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Scott Cameron will present at a meeting of state and Federal agencies in Helena, Montana, on efforts undertaken over the last three months in cooperation with the Western Governors' Association to integrate policy among Federal, state, and tribal partners to improve the prevention, eradication, and containment of aquatic invasive species in the Pacific Northwest.

On June 28, W&S will participate in the Greater Baltimore Wilderness Coalition (GBWC) twice-yearly steering committee meetings. GBWC was established under the Baltimore Urban Waters Federal Partnership with the goals of creating accessible, interconnected and healthy green spaces from downtown to the countryside. FWS, The Conservation Fund, and the American Planning Association are founding partners of GBWC. W&S and USGS have been strong participants.

## **30-60 DAY LOOK-AHEAD**

### **Office of the Solicitor**

#### **SIGNIFICANT LITIGATION DEADLINES FOR NEXT THREE WEEKS SEPARATELY REPORTED**

### **Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks**

On August 18, Olympic National Park will host a special event at Hurricane Ridge celebrating the renaming of the Olympic Wilderness to the Daniel J. Evans Wilderness by a 2016 act of Congress. Evans, a former Washington state governor and U.S. Senator, was the lead sponsor of the Washington Park Wilderness Act of 1988. Evans will speak at the event and various Congress members and/or staff are expected to among the estimated 150 participants.

### **U.S. Fish And Wildlife Service**

#### **Grants**

On or around July 7, through the Secretary, FWS plans to announce nearly \$15 million in grants to 40 states for projects to support recreational boating through the Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) program. More than \$9 million of this will go to six states (California, Maine, Michigan, South Carolina, Texas and Washington) for competitive grants, and the remaining \$5 million will go to 39 states, commonwealths, territories and the District of Columbia for a smaller, non-competitive grant program. Funding is generated through the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund by excise taxes on sport fishing and boating equipment and tackle, motorboat fuels and import duties on fishing tackle, yachts and pleasure craft. Grants, which are matched by funding from project partners, support construction or renovation of tie-ups, utilities, fuel stations, pump-out and dump stations, restrooms and additional sanitary amenities such as laundry and showers for recreational boaters. Outreach to be determined by the Department and includes the potential for a Secretarial event possibly in conjunction with the CVA grants announcement (see below). Outreach (news release and social media) can be done with local and national media outlets and special interest media such as boaters, anglers, marina owners and conservation organizations. This is not controversial.

On or around July 7, through the Secretary, FWS plans to announce nearly \$15.4 million in grants to 20 states for projects to support clean water and recreational boating through the Service's Clean Vessel Act Grant (CVA) program. The CVA program provides grant funds to the states, the District of Columbia and insular areas for the construction, renovation, operation and maintenance of pumpout stations and waste reception facilities for recreational boaters and also for educational programs that inform boaters of the importance of proper disposal of their sewage. Funding is generated through the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund by excise taxes on sport fishing and boating equipment and tackle, motorboat fuels and import duties on fishing tackle, yachts and pleasure craft. Outreach to be determined by the Department and includes the potential for a Secretarial event possibly in conjunction with the BIG grants announcement (see above). Outreach (news release and social media) can be done with local and

national media outlets and special interest media such as boaters, anglers, marina owners and conservation organizations. This is not controversial.

By July 15, FWS plans to announce about \$1 million in white-nose syndrome grants to states. The grants will help states respond to the deadly white-nose syndrome disease of bats through actions such as looking for the fungus that causes the disease, carrying out decontamination procedures at state caves and mines, and monitoring bat populations. White-nose syndrome is a disease caused by a fungus that has killed millions of valuable insect-eating bats and has been found in 31 states. Recent studies have shown that the agricultural value of insect control by bats is \$1.4 billion annually in Texas alone. The FWS leads the national response to the disease. This action is not controversial. A news release and outreach to interested stakeholders is planned – we will coordinate with AFWA and/or state wildlife directors.

Pending Departmental clearance, FWS will announce the approval of around \$4 million in grants for 31 projects throughout the Americas as part of the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act grant program. Exact date and award amount are not yet determined. News release and outreach to bird-centric media are planned. This is not controversial.

Pending Departmental advisement, FWS will approve a slate of projects for funding under the Competitive State Wildlife Grants program. The projects focus on “species of greatest conservation need” identified in State Wildlife Action Plans. Funds for this program are appropriated annually by Congress. FWS Regional Offices will submit individual grants for DOI approval prior to award. This is not controversial. No outreach is planned.

## **Hot Topics**

On July 10, Representative Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio) is hosting a public event in suburban Cleveland to discuss Great Lakes issues. Rep. Kaptur is inviting several experts to sit on the panel and answer audience questions about the Great Lakes ecological issues. FWS Midwest Deputy Regional Director Charlie Wooley will attend and answer questions about Asian carp. Other groups represented will include NOAA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and two or three NGOs.

## **Asian Carp**

The 2016 Water Resources Reform and Development Act Report to Congress on Asian carp is currently being finalized for delivery to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks for review by June 30. Notable changes from the 2015 report include the slight range expansion of silver carp, the movement of juvenile Asian carps in the sub-basins and additional information on the status of black carp. As in previous years, the 2016 report will be made available to the public on [AsianCarp.us](http://AsianCarp.us). The Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014, includes direction from Congress to FWS to lead a multiagency effort to slow the spread of Asian carp in the Upper Mississippi River and Ohio River basins, in coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Park Service and the U.S. Geological Survey. Specifically, WRRDA calls for the FWS to develop and deliver a report to Congress summarizing all activities and expenditures (both federal and non-federal) related to Asian carp

prevention efforts in the two watersheds, as well as describing any observed changes in the range of Asian carp in Upper Mississippi River and Ohio River basins. The report also outlines research that could improve the ability to control the spread of Asian carp and quantitative measures proposed for use in documenting progress in controlling the spread of Asian carp. This is potentially controversial due to the slight range expansion of silver carp. No public outreach is planned. FWS will conduct outreach to Congress.

### **Endangered Species Act Recovery Actions**

On July 19-20, FWS will host public scoping meetings in Central Oregon to gather information to prepare a draft environmental impact statement related to the Deschutes Basin Habitat Conservation Plan. The Deschutes Basin Board of Control and the City of Prineville are the permit applicants for the incidental take of three listed species: Oregon spotted frog, bull trout and steelhead. Media expected. Stakeholders include local farmers, irrigators, and recreationists. WaterWatch of Oregon, Center for Biological Diversity, Coalition for the Deschutes, Trout Unlimited and the Deschutes River Conservancy will likely get involved in the NEPA process. This will be regionally controversial. Outreach is planned to alert the public to the meetings. There will be a news release, social media posts and outreach to local and state representatives. Phone calls will be made and emails sent to the partners already listed in the report item. The meetings are just the first step in the scoping process, so there will be follow-up outreach with interested partners after the meetings.

After the upcoming release of the Mexican wolf draft recovery plan and during the public comment period that follows, FWS will continue seeking review and comment on the peer-reviewed draft revision from local, state and federal agencies, tribes and the public in both the United States and Mexico. Due to the high level of visibility and controversy on Mexican wolf recovery in general, extensive outreach is planned including personal phone calls and public meetings. In addition, FWS will ensure information is readily available on the Mexican wolf recovery website and through social media (Facebook and Twitter). New postings will be done when key dates are occurring. To gain additional comments and feedback, FWS is hosting public meetings in Arizona and New Mexico on the updated Mexican wolf recovery plan between July 18 and July 22.

In early August, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a notice of availability of a draft post-delisting monitoring plan and reopen the public comment period on the proposed rule to delist the black-capped vireo. The post-delisting monitoring plan will be finalized in concert with the decision on the final delisting rule in January 2018. This action may become controversial. Stakeholders include the petitioners, Pacific Legal Foundation, the Office of Travis Co. Judge, Big Bend National Park and others. There have been a number of public comments opposing the delisting of the black-capped vireo, and a number of partner agencies concerned about having the necessary funds to implement the ongoing management needs (cowbird removal) and monitoring identified for their lands, which may also result in concerns about the viability of both the delisting and the post-delisting monitoring plan. Planned outreach will include notifications to local stakeholders, a press release to local media and social media posts.

In early August, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a notice of availability of a draft

post-delisting monitoring plan, and reopen the public comment period on the proposed rule to delist the lesser long-nosed bat. The post-delisting monitoring plan will be finalized in concert with the decision on the final delisting rule in January 2018. This action is not controversial. Stakeholders are the Pacific Legal Foundation and the New Mexico Cattle Growers Association. Planned outreach will include notifications to local stakeholders, a press release to local media and social media posts.

### **Endangered Species Act Listing/Delisting Actions**

In mid-July, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a notice announcing a six-month extension of the final determination of whether to list the San Fernando Valley spineflower, a plant species from southern California, as a result of substantial scientific disagreement concerning the species. This notice will also reopen the comment period on the proposed rule to list the species for an additional 30 days. The spineflower listing is locally controversial, but filing a six-month extension is not expected to be controversial. Interested stakeholder is Newhall Ranch. Outreach will include stakeholder notifications, press release to local media and posting of notice to field office newsroom.

In mid-July, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a proposal to list the Louisiana pine snake, located in Louisiana and Texas, as a threatened species with a 4(d) rule. This action is controversial. Stakeholders include the U.S. Army, the U.S. Forest Service, State and private landowners and the timber industry. Planned outreach will include notifications to stakeholders and relevant members of Congress, press release to local media and social media posts.

In mid-July, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a notice reopening for public comment the proposed listing of western glacier stonefly and meltwater lednian stonefly, located in Montana and Wyoming, as threatened species. The reopening will allow the public to comment on new range information regarding western glacier stonefly. This action is not expected to be controversial. Interested stakeholders include WildEarth Guardians and the States of Montana and Wyoming. A regional news release is planned.

In late July, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a 12-month finding and proposed delisting determination on the Deseret milkvetch, found in Utah. The Service concluded that the threats (residential development, highway widening, livestock grazing, and small population size) either have not occurred to the extent anticipated, are being adequately managed, or the species is more tolerant of the stressor than originally known. Interested stakeholders include the petitioner, Western Area Power Administration, entities that own lands occupied by the species, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and Utah Division of Transportation. Planned outreach will include a regional news release, emailing the news release to relevant congressional offices and phone calls to the respective state wildlife directors. This is not expected to garner national attention.

In late July, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final rule to remove the eastern cougar (historically known to exist in southeastern Ontario, southern Quebec and New Brunswick in Canada and a region bounded from Maine to Michigan, Illinois, Kentucky and South Carolina in the eastern United States) from the list of endangered and threatened species due to extinction.

Although we do not anticipate major public controversy with regard to the final rule, opposition to our conclusion of extinction may be expressed by advocates and advocacy organizations for puma and large predator conservation who maintain that eastern cougars still exist. However, the best available information indicates that sightings of cougars in the east are cases of mistaken identity (with bobcats) or escaped captive animals or, rarely, cougars from western populations dispersing eastwards. Interested parties include eastern U.S. states, the Humane Society of the United States, the Animal Legal Defense Fund and the Cougar Network. National news bulletin and Congressional emails are planned.

In early August, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a notice designating critical habitat for three plant species on Hawaii Island and correct the maps for existing designations for an additional four species there. We intend to exclude lands owned or managed by the Queen Liliuokalani Trust, the Department of Hawaiian Homelands and other private landowners under Section 4(b)(2) of the Act. This action is not controversial. Interested stakeholders include the State of Hawaii and multiple state agencies, the County of Hawaii and various private landowners. Outreach includes a news release, social media, emails and phone calls to Congressional offices and stakeholders mentioned above.

In early August, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* 90-day petition findings for five species: the oblong rocksail, sicklefin chub, sturgeon chub, tricolored bat and Venus flytrap. As part of this batched finding we are publishing a correction to the 90-day finding for leopards which clarifies the range and the entity we are evaluating in our status review. The findings in this batch are not expected to be controversial, however, the substantial 90-day finding for the tricolored bat might generate attention, given that the primary threat to it is white-nosed syndrome (which is threatening other bat species across North America). Stakeholders for the tricolored bat include the wind, oil and gas industries, federal forest land managers (Department of Defense, Forest Service, National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management), private forest landowners, States, Canada and Mexico, federal academic researchers (U.S. Geological Survey and universities), the caving community, and local municipalities and homeowners who have bats on their property. Stakeholders for the other species include the Center for Biological Diversity, Cahaba River Keeper, WildEarth Guardians, Defenders of Wildlife, the Humane Society, International Fund for Animal Welfare, the Fund for Animals and several individuals. Outreach will include notifications to stakeholders and petitioners and a low-key national news bulletin to media.

### **National Wildlife Refuge Actions**

In July, FWS will publish a proposed rule and open a 30-day public comment period on the 2017-18 Refuge-Specific Hunting and Sport Fishing Regulations. The proposed rule would open various national wildlife refuges to hunting and/or sport fishing for the first time (new hunts) and expand hunting and fishing opportunities at others. Outreach is planned to include a national news release when the *Federal Register* notice is published and notifications to members of Congress in affected districts, with some stakeholder outreach.

### **Migratory Bird Management Actions**

On or around July 15, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* its annual proposal for administering tribal hunting, fishing and gathering rights under multiple treaties for several federally recognized tribes in the Great Lakes region. The proposal has been compiled in consultation with the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, which represents 11 tribes in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan. FWS has informed the Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan DNRs of the agency's support for these proposed regulations. A final decision will not be made until after public comments are reviewed and would not take effect until the fall 2017 hunting season. The proposal is expected to be controversial due to the inclusion of several new techniques for tribal members to take waterfowl, including electronic calls, hand held nets and snares, and use of these nets at night.

### **Hurricane Sandy Recovery**

On or about July 5, FWS and partners will begin removal of Hunters Pond Dam in Scituate, Massachusetts. The project, partially funded by DOI's Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Competitive Grant program administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, is a high priority for the restoration of river herring and will open up five miles of riverine channel and 200 acres of alewife pond spawning habitat. Partners include Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, North and South Rivers Watershed Association, Town of Scituate and the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management. Local media and stakeholder outreach is planned.

On or about July 7, FWS, state and local officials will celebrate the reopening of the White River National Fish Hatchery. The hatchery was severely damaged after Hurricane Irene in 2010 and it took congressional appropriations to repair the damage and reopen the facility. The facility will focus efforts on restoring land-locked Atlantic salmon and lake trout to Lake Champlain and its tributaries in Vermont, New York and Quebec as well as lake trout in Lakes Erie and Ontario. The Vermont congressional delegation has been invited. Local media advisory and news release are planned with a possible pitch to AP, which has covered the story.

### **National Park Service**

In July, the NPS anticipates the announcement of the \$1.75 million in available Maritime Heritage project grant funding. These grants will be used for maritime heritage education and preservation projects related to the maritime heritage of the United States. The National Maritime Heritage Act established the National Maritime Heritage Grants Program within the Department of the Interior. The grants program is administered in partnership with the Maritime Administration. It provides funding for education and preservation projects designed to preserve historic maritime resources and is funded through a percentage of the proceeds from the sale or scrapping of obsolete vessels of the National Defense Reserve Fleet. All grants awarded must be matched on a 1-to-1 basis with non-Federal assets.

In July, the NPS anticipates the announcement of the \$3,623,162 in available Battlefield Land Acquisition grant funding. Grants will be used to protect 999 acres of Revolutionary and Civil War battlefields in Virginia, Mississippi, New York, West Virginia, and Maryland. The NPS works with private landowners, battlefield friends groups, interested community groups, non-

profit organizations, academic institutions, local, state, and tribal governments and Federal agencies for preservation projects and local acquisition of Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and Civil War battlefield land. The NPS is working with the Secretary's office on an event and the communications plan.

In July, the NPS will announce the award of \$18 million in centennial challenge projects. Many of the projects accomplish deferred maintenance projects, and all represent public-private partnerships, since each project requires a minimum 50/50 match with non-federal funds. NPS is coordinating with DOI Communications on the public announcement and notification to the recipients.

In July, the NPS anticipates the announcement of \$15 million in Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership grant funding for approximately 25 projects. A total of 51 projects were submitted by states to acquire and develop outdoor recreation spaces. This competitive program supplements the annual Land and Water Conservation Fund apportionment to states by supporting projects for disadvantaged populations in urban areas. NPS is coordinating with DOI Communications on the public announcement and notification to the recipients

In July, the NPS will announce the apportionment of \$1,635,742 in Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act grants to fund repatriation and reburial projects. The grants will assist in consultation, documentation, and repatriation of ancestors and sacred objects, objects of cultural patrimony, and funerary objects back to Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations. Enacted in 1990, NAGPRA requires museums and Federal agencies to inventory and identify Native American human remains and cultural items in their collections, and to consult with Indian tribes, Alaska Native villages, and Native Hawaiian organizations regarding repatriation. Section 10 of the Act authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to award grants to assist in implementing provisions of the Act. The NPS will coordinate with DOI Communications on the public announcement and notification to the recipients

In July, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park fire assessment review will be released. In February, a team of fire experts (federal and state) convened at Great Smoky Mountains National Park to conduct an independent review of the 2016 Chimney Tops 2 fire that started in the park on November 23. The purpose of the review is to assess the facts leading up to and during the Chimney Tops 2 fire within the boundaries of the park, as well as make recommendations on any planning, operational, or managerial issues which can be addressed locally, regionally, and/or nationally to reduce the chances of a similar incident in the future. The NPS has received tort claims related to this incident and expects additional lawsuits soon.

On July 11, the NPS will meet with representatives of the Sitka Tribe of Alaska to begin negotiations regarding the Tribe's proposal for compacting certain NPS functions at the park. A pre-negotiation meeting regarding the request was held in late May. The Tribe is seeking to manage maintenance and interpretation & education functions in the park in FY-18.

In mid-July, Mojave National Preserve will begin a 60-day public comment period on the Water Resources Plan and draft Environmental Impact Statement (WRP/DEIS). The plan will manage both developed (diverted springs and wildlife guzzlers) and undeveloped water resources in the

park. The process is being closely watched by local hunting groups interested in the management of wildlife guzzlers (large basins which catch rainwater and provide a watering source for wildlife and cattle), which are viewed as necessary to maintaining a healthy bighorn sheep population for hunting.

## **Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs and the Bureaus of Indian Affairs and Indian Education**

On July 7, the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs will hold a field hearing in Santa Fe, New Mexico on Native American Art and Crafts authentic crafts and fraudulent crafts.

July 10 is the new deadline for public comments for the Bears Ears National Monument, and the deadline for comments on all other monument designations under review.

On July 12, a Senate Committee on Indian Affairs hearing on Federal Recognition bills S. 1285 and S. 1223 is scheduled.

July 15 is the deadline for comments on E.O 13871, how Interior and the Federal government can be reorganized.

On July 19, 2017, a Senate Committee on Indian Affairs hearing oversight hearing on Indian Gaming is scheduled.

On July 26, a Senate Committee on Indian Affairs oversight hearing on “Human Trafficking” is scheduled.

August 12 is the deadline for proposals from Tribes for the Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development’s (IEED’s) FY 2017 Native American Business Development Institute (NABDI) economic development feasibility study grant program. This grant program has, among other successes, enabled the Citizen Potawatomi Nation to build an industrial park and restore a 66-mile rail line that opens an east-west connection to four major north-south rail corridors for regional commerce.

### **Items of Note/Expected Legislative, Legal, Policy Issues**

#### ***Regulations Ready for OS Review***

- None at this time.

#### ***Regulations Pending Departmental Review, Then Ready for AS-IA Signature***

- **Proposed rules pending publication:**

- **Indian Electric Power Utilities (25 CFR 175):** This proposed rule would not make any substantive changes to the regulations, but would revise the regulations to be in plain language. The regulations affect only a limited number of Tribes because there are only three BIA electric power utilities: Colorado River (serving

the Colorado River Indian Tribes Reservation), Mission Valley Power (serving the Salish & Kootenai Tribes, Flathead Indian Reservation), and San Carlos Irrigation Project (serving Gila River Indian Community).

- *Status:* The proposed rule will be presented to the AS-IA transition contact in preparation for AS-IA signature.

#### ***Upcoming FACA Committee Notices***

- **BIE Negotiated Rulemaking on Accountability (25 CFR 30):** The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires BIE to use a negotiated rulemaking process to develop regulations for implementation no later than the 2017-2018 academic year and to define the standards, assessments, and accountability system consistent with Section 1111 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for the schools funded by BIE on a national, regional, or tribal basis.
  - *Status:* [No Change] BIE is preparing a new notice of intent to establish the committee and solicitation for membership.

#### **Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management**

During the month of July, the U.S. Army will undertake a munitions cleanup in public access areas at BLM-CA's Fort Ord National Monument. Fort Ord is located about ten miles northeast of Monterey and is in the Central California District Office. The cleanup encompasses about 800 acres of BLM-managed lands and Army-managed lands in the northern portion of the monument. The first phase of cleanup is cutting vegetation, which will require road and trail closures. Phase two will include prescribed burning.

On July 3, BLM-AK will review and provide comments on the Donlin Gold preliminary final EIS for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the lead agency for the project. Donlin Gold LLC applied for permits for an open pit, hard rock gold mine located approximately 277 miles west of Anchorage, in southwest AK. The project also requires transportation infrastructure and a pipeline.

On July 10, four individuals charged with various crimes during the 2014 Gold Butte cattle impoundment are scheduled to be re-tried following the declaration of a mistrial on April 24, 2017. BLM-NV's Communications Office is coordinating with BLM-WO and the Department of Justice.

During the week of July 10, OSMRE anticipates publishing a Notice of Availability for the Bridger Mine Mining Plan Modification Draft EA, initiating a 30-day comment period. The Bridger Mine is an underground mine located in Sweetwater County, WY that employs 540 people. If the modification is approved, production is estimated to be 2.24 million tons per year.

During the week of July 10, OSMRE plans to publish a Notice of Availability for the Cordero Rojo Mine Mining Plan Modification Draft EA, initiating a 30-day public comment period. Cloud Peak Energy's Cordero Rojo Mine is a surface mine located in Campbell County, WY. The mine employs 383 people and produces approximately 20 million tons of coal per year.

On July 11, BSEE Director Scott Angelle is scheduled to speak at the American Petroleum Institute's Safe Lifting Conference in Houston, TX. The conference will cover lifting operations and standards for platform-based cranes.

On July 13, BOEM plans to hold an Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force meeting in San Luis Obispo, CA to discuss the results of the collaborative data and information collection efforts and the potential areas identified for the Call for Information and Nominations (Call). Development of the Call was necessitated by an application for a commercial lease submitted by Trident Wind offshore Morrow Bay, CA in January 2016 and competitive interest indicated by Statoil in its response to the subsequent Request for Information in August 2016.

On July 14, BSEE Director Scott Angelle will speak at a meeting of the National Ocean Industries Association (NOIA) Legislative Strategy Group in Washington, DC.

In mid-July, OSMRE's Western Region plans to publish a Notice of Availability for the John Henry Mine Mining Plan Modification draft EA and unsigned FONSI, initiating a 30-day public comment period. Pacific Coast Coal Company's John Henry Mine is a surface mine located in King County, WA. This coal mine has been inactive since 1999.

On July 17, BOEM plans to publish the Final Notice of Sale and Record of Decision for GOM Lease Sale 249. The sale is scheduled for August 16 and will be the first lease sale under the 2017-2022 OCS Oil & Gas Program as well as the first region-wide sale.

During the week of July 17, BSEE Director Scott Angelle will attend individual meetings with members of the AK Congressional delegation to discuss offshore developing in the Arctic OCS region leading in to his trip to AL the following week.

On July 18 – 20, Acting ASLM Kate MacGregor and Acting BLM Director Mike Nedd will participate in the 15<sup>th</sup> annual Governor's Trail Ride hosted by the Idaho Cattle Association and Idaho Governor Butch Otter. The event, which will take place on historic ranchland in the Upper Snake River Valley, is designed to provide an opportunity to explore natural resource issues and will include discussions about improvements to the Federal grazing permit process and sustainable land use.

On July 19, BLM plans to hold an auction of Federally-owned crude helium. Under the Helium Stewardship Act of 2013, the BLM must offer for auction and sale annually a portion of the helium reserves stored underground at the Cliffside Gas Field, near Amarillo, TX. The BLM anticipates auctioning 500 MMcf in a total of 30 lots for delivery in FY 2018. Following the auction, the BLM will offer an allocated sale in which helium is offered to refiners, and a non-allocated sale in which the helium is offered to non-refiners.

On July 22, the BLM-OR/WA Lakeview Resource Area plans to hold an open house to discuss ongoing work with a private, non-profit partner to develop a multi-prong approach to managing the Beatty Butte Herd Management Area. For the first time, an external partner will work with BLM staff to bait trap horses, administer PZP to mares, and gentle horses considered good candidates for adoption.

On July 28, BOEM will publish a Notice of Availability of the Final Supplemental EIS for the Cape Wind Project. The EIS will supplement the 2009 Final EIS and is being prepared pursuant to a remand order from the D.C. Circuit Court. The ROD will publish on August 11.

On July 28, BOEM plans to publish the Notice of Availability of the Draft EIS for the Development and Production Plan for the Hilcorp Liberty Project. The Liberty Project is a 9-acre man-made gravel island proposed to be constructed approximately 5.6 miles offshore in the Beaufort Sea that would be capable of facilitating both drilling and processing operations.

On July 28, the BLM anticipates publishing proposed revisions to the Waste Prevention Rule in the Federal Register.

On August 3, BLM-NV Las Vegas Field Office will hold the spring land sale under the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) in Las Vegas. The BLM proposes to offer for competitive sale 81.25 acres of public land in 17 parcels. In accordance with SNPLMA, funds generated by the sale will be used for projects such as the development of parks, trails, and natural areas, capital improvements on Federal lands, acquisition of environmentally sensitive land, and Lake Tahoe restoration projects.

## **Assistant Secretary Policy, Management and Budget**

**GAO's High Risk List: Management of Federal Oil and Gas Resources.** The GAO added the Department's Management of Federal Oil and Gas Resources to its High Risk List in 2011. GAO's concerns included: (1) collecting appropriate revenues from companies drilling for oil and gas on Federal lands and waters; (2) challenges with hiring, training, and retaining staff to oversee and manage oil and gas operations; and (3) undertaking a major reorganization of its oversight of offshore oil and gas management and revenue collection functions. To address GAO's findings highlighted in several reports, the Department implemented 109 of the 120 oil and gas-related recommendations. GAO is currently undergoing review of *BLM's Management of Oil and Gas Lease Suspensions*, *BLM's Oil and Gas Inspection and Enforcement Program*, *BLM's Oil and Gas Well Liability*, and *Factors Affecting Oil and Gas Bonus Bids*. The Department is considering a meeting with GAO to discuss potential findings in the ongoing reviews and final actions to remove Oil and Gas from the High Risk List.

**DATA Act Review Entrance Conference.** The Department has received notification of a new GAO review that will examine the implementation of the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act. GAO's objectives are to: (1) assess the completeness, timeliness, and accuracy of selected data elements submitted by agencies under the DATA Act for display on USA Spending.gov or successor system, and (2) assess OMB and Treasury's progress toward addressing issues related to implementation of the DATA Act. The entrance conference for the review was conducted on Thursday, June 15, 2017. The focus of the review will be on the 24 CFO agencies and the audit will compare original data source to published data. Agency records must meet records management standards and Systems of Records Notifications must be in place. The review is expected to complete by November 8, 2017.

**Border Security Meetings, Santa Ana, TX, June 2017.** Interagency Borderlands Coordinator

Jon Andrew and new Coordinator Brent Range will attend a planning meeting with National Wildlife Refuge staff and U.S. Customs and Border Protection facilities personnel at the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters. Pre-planning activities, including proposed geotechnical surveys, will be reviewed. Visits to possible construction sites may also be conducted.

**U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Meeting, August 7-12, 2017.** The Office of Policy Analysis (PPA), the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program, and the State of Florida are coordinating the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF) biannual meeting to be held in Ft. Lauderdale, with a public Business Meeting to be held on August 11. The Governor of Florida will host the meeting and will tentatively make remarks at the Business Meeting. The theme of the meeting is “Healthy Reefs for a Healthy Economy” and the focus of discussion will be on the value of coral reefs and local actions taken to address key issues in the Florida reef tract. The meeting will include several progress reports on implementation of the USCRTF Strategy and FY16-20 Framework for Action.

**OMB Travel, August 14-18, 2017.** Craig Crutchfield, Interior Branch Chief, will travel to Oregon August 14-18 to visit FWS, NPS, and BLM sites. Details are still being finalized. Olivia Ferriter, DAS-BFPA, will accompany him on the trip.

**Border Security Forum, Tucson, AZ, September 2017.** A border wide leadership meeting on southwest border security and environmental protection is still expected to take place in September 2017 (date TBD) in Tucson, AZ. Planning for possible new border security infrastructure is expected to be the main focus of the meeting. Senior officials at DOI, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Border Patrol and USDA Forest Service are expected to attend.

### **New Government Accountability Office (GAO) Audits**

**Illegal Federal Timber Export (Job Code 102109).** Per request from Congressman Peter DeFazio, GAO will review: (1) policies and procedures the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have in place to prevent illegal Federal timber export or substitution; (2) extent to which unprocessed Federal timber has been exported or substituted in violation of the law during the past decade, and enforcement actions agencies have taken in response to any detected violations; and (3) additional agency policies or procedures that, if implemented, could reduce the incidence of illegal Federal timber export or substitution. The entrance with BLM staff is not scheduled.

### **Recent Final GAO Reports**

**Wildland Fire Risk Reduction: Multiple Factors Affect Federal-Nonfederal Collaboration, but Action Could Be Taken to Better Measure Progress (GAO-17-357).** Per request from Congressman Peter DeFazio, Ranking Member Raul Grijalva of the House Committee on Natural Resources, and Ranking Member Alan Lowenthal of the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, House Committee on Natural Resources, GAO reviewed collaboration to reduce wildland fire risk to communities and examined Federal officials' and stakeholders' views

on factors impacting collaboration aimed at reducing wildland fire risk to communities and actions that could improve their ability to reduce risk to communities. GAO issued the final report on June 9 and recommends that USFS and the Department work with the Wildland Fire Leadership Council to develop measures to assess progress toward achieving the Cohesive Strategy's goals. The Department's 60-day letter addressing the recommendation is due August 9.

### **Recent Draft OIG Reports**

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program Grants Awarded to the State of Mississippi, Department of Marine Resources From July 1, 2014, Through June 30, 2016 (2017-EXT-003).** The OIG audited costs claimed under grants awarded by the State of Mississippi, Department of Marine Resources by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). FWS provided the grants to the State under the Sport Fish Restoration Program (Program). The audit included claims totaling \$2,024,635 on 20 grants that were open during the State fiscal years that ended June 30, 2015, and June 30, 2016. The audit also covered the Department's compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and FWS guidelines, including those related to collecting and using fishing license revenue and reporting program income. The OIG questioned costs totaling \$12,651 due to inadequate oversight of its financial reporting process. The OIG issued the draft report June 9 with three recommendations to the FWS. The response is due July 24.

### **Assistant Secretary for Water and Science**

On July 24, W&S Scott Cameron and Ryan Nichols will host the quarterly DOI Urban Team meeting. Representatives from NPS, FWS, USGS, and Reclamation have been meeting quarterly to share information about respective bureau work in cities, to encourage collaboration and, most importantly, leveraging funding and expertise in urban areas, where it is expensive to operate. The Team will be focusing efforts and resources on four cities over the next 2-3 years: Albuquerque, San Antonio, NW Indiana region, and New York City.

In August, USGS and W&S will select projects for four Urban Waters Federal Partnership locations (Albuquerque, San Antonio, NW Indiana Region, and NYC). In the 2017 budget omnibus, Congress dedicated \$717K of USGS funds for Urban Waters-focused projects. USGS has been working with local partners to identify high priority, water-related projects to implement.